

Mint service posts gains amid the gripes

By Roger Boye

IT'S UNUSUAL to hear, but some collectors have been praising the United States Mint for speedy service.

Usually, collectors complain that Mint employees take an extraordinary long time — often more than nine months — to fill orders for proof sets, an atrocious service record.

This year, U.S. Mint executives resolved that they would try to improve service, and they apparently have kept their promise, at least for some persons.

Four Chicago-area collectors have written to say they received their sets in June, less than two months after ordering them. Similar reports of comparatively fast service have been received by editors of the weekly coin periodicals.

But not everyone is so lucky. I sent in my order in May, and received an acknowledgment card that promised delivery in November. But

even that is better than the eight months I waited for my 1976 sets.

Incidentally, the Mint is no longer accepting orders for 1977 proof sets.

NEW EDITIONS of two important numismatic references have been published recently. Here is information about them.

- "Standard Catalog of World Paper Money," by Albert Pick. This book received many accolades when it first appeared in 1975, primarily because compilation of the catalog was such a massive undertaking. The 1977 (second) edition is a definite improvement. Many new notes have been added (including a section on currency of the Confederate States of America), it's easier to read, and the price information has been refined.

However, not all collectors who bought the first edition may be able to afford the luxury of updating their numismatic libraries, since the

book costs \$17.50. It may be purchased in some coin stores, or from the publisher, Krause Publication, 700 E. State St., Iola, Wis. 54945.

- "A Guide Book of United States Coins," by R. S. Yeoman. The Red Book, as it is more commonly known, is the most popular of all numismatic references. This edition is the 31st for Yeoman, a hobby giant who has worked for the book's publisher, Whitman Coin Products, since 1932.

The changes in this edition are rather modest. Retail price information for all U.S. coins has been updated, the section on Colonial coins has been revised, and information on grading coins has been changed.

Nevertheless, collectors likely will buy many thousands of copies (at \$3.95 each) because getting a new Red Book has become coin collecting's summer ritual.